

Press Release

**Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi
&
India Habitat Centre**

Present

ENCOUNTER

A S O L O S H O W

An Exhibition of Paintings & Installations
by **Veer Munshi**

Venue	:	Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi
Preview	:	25th August, 2006 at 7 p.m.
Show Dates	:	25th to 30th August, 2006 (11a.m. to 7 p.m.)

*Exiles cross boundaries
break barriers
of thought and experience.
– Edward Said*

Art Alive Gallery in collaboration with India Habitat Centre presents 'Encounter' – a solo show of the recent works of Veer Munshi. Featuring both paintings and installations, Veer's works are based on his journey as an artist who also has shifted to capital city from native land Kashmir 15 years back personifies his experiences with change of location and environment and its effects on the change of imagery of visual language which turns global rather than regional though connected to roots so called belonging.

One can view his obsession of making boats, nostalgic images of past and global security system of present used as national symbols like India Gate under the guards or flight of a Sonia as a political priest. There are Dialogue images to counter division and partition for supported by huge installation showing countless pigeons trying to rest on human mind

Veer goes beyond the politics of Kashmir to the human dimensions of the tragedy of partition and migration worldwide. He comments that his own loss has made him keenly

aware of the repercussions of exiles across the world. His installations in wood, metal, papier mache are poignant memories of his own past – being obsessively concerned with the boat, the shikara, upturned so that it represents a coffin, at times blackened, at times repeating his own self portrait – branded with multiple identities.

His canvas titled Encounter evokes that ethereal landscape of lake and mountains in the foreground; while the foreground confronts us with two figures: one of the ‘common man’, naked and vulnerable; and next to him a militia man in camouflaged uniform. Standing beside each other and looking back to the mountains, together they represent the conflicts, the violation of human rights, of denying a people their freedom.

Three key words form Veer Munshi’s essential vocabulary in images: division/ partition/ migration. These three are integrated so that one word-image leads to the next. Division is that of ideology, belief and identity which divides communities. Partition is the geopolitics of this division – in the Indian subcontinent as also elsewhere – depicted through a strip of land which separates people on two sides of the border. Two men crouch on either side of this border facing each other, in Eye to Eye; while two large dogs confront each other across the border in Dialogue. The inference is explicit and also, ironical when you are faced with dogs and crouching, bestial humans.

Migration is the fall out of partition when millions of refugees move across borders – not just from India and Pakistan and Bangladesh but from Palestine to Jordan, from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Africa. Edward Said who has written more eloquently on exile than perhaps any other writer asserts that the 20th century has witnessed more migration of refugees than ever in past centuries.

Migration of human beings is like of species who keep shifting to different locations and environment due to different reasons may it be political, social or economical; likewise partition is territorial allocation where countries are divided causing forceful resettlement or migration due to political reasons; division is where the ideology differs from person to person despite cast creed and colour confronts victim vs. victimizer.

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